

SM-270
Piney Point Coast Guard Light Station
Hurry Road (MD 498)
Piney Point
County

EASEMENT

1836
Builder: John Donahoo

The Piney Point Coast Guard Light Station consists of a conical brick light tower and a brick keeper's quarters with a shallow gable roof. The lighthouse is a conical structure of brick painted white, 30' high. The focal plane of the light was 34' above the base. A 9-sided cupola constructed of metal with rectangular glass panes surmounts the brick tower. This is covered with a standing-seam metal roof capped with a large ventilator ball. An iron railing, 40" high, runs along the edge of the cantilevered masonry parapet walkway. Access to the cupola is gained by means of a circular wood stairway which occupies the entire core of the structure. The stairwell is lit by 6/6 sash windows. Interesting early iron hardware remains on the heavy entrance door. Though the Fresnel lens has been removed, the appearance of the structure is essentially as constructed in 1836. The keeper's quarters is a brick constructed building, 34' x 20', with a 15' x 11' wing of stuccoed frame construction. Two stories over a full basement, the keeper's quarters has undergone radical interior alterations which have obliterated original conditions. The building has a shallow gable roof of standing-seam metal. A one-story porch extends across the northwest (entrance) facade. As constructed by John Donahoo in 1836, the keeper's quarters was a tiny one-story brick building of three rooms. This was enlarged in 1884 by the addition of a second story. At one time, the property also included a fog signal house, an oilhouse, a storehouse, and an outhouse.

Constructed in 1836, Piney Point was the first lighthouse built on the Potomac River. John Donahoo, constructor of several lighthouses in the Chesapeake Bay area, erected this structure at a cost of about \$5,000. The property on which the lighthouse was constructed was acquired in fee simple from Henry Suter and Charlotte Suter, his wife, by warranty deed dated 24 December 1835 for \$300. The lighthouse was erected to replace a lightship which had been in operation at the site since 1821 to warn mariners of dangerous shoals at Piney Point and across the Potomac at Ragged Point. In 1855, the old reflecting apparatus--ten lamps and ten 15" reflectors with a visibility of 10 miles--was replaced with a more efficient 5th-order Fresnel lens, increasing the light's visibility a full mile. In 1880, a 30' bell tower was added to the station to protect mariners from fog. This fog bell had an automatic striking device. A square frame tapering tower with 4/4 sash windows in gable-roofed dormers piercing the sides, the fog bell tower was destroyed by Hurricane Hazel in 1954. Piney Point was a busy recreation area for Southern Marylanders between 1820 and 1910. President James Monroe maintained a cottage at Piney Point, known as "The Summer White House." A hotel was in operation until closing due to damage sustained during the hurricane of 1933. Piney Point Light continued as a manned station under the lighthouse service until the incorporation of that service into the Coast Guard in 1939. Piney Point became a testing range for torpedoes during World War II. Following the war, the Naval Torpedo Test Center and Range was decommissioned and the base became known as the Pane Hall Center of the Harry Lundeberg School of Seamanship.

The Coast Guard discontinued the light in 1964. The property is now owned by the St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks and is open to the public.

Easement

S M -270
PINEY POINT LIGHT STATION
Piney Point

1836

The lighthouse and keeper's quarters built on Piney Point in 1836 comprised the first light station on the Potomac River. Constructed by John Donohoo, the light was manned under the lighthouse service until its incorporation into the Coast Guard in 1939. The light was discontinued in 1964, but the Coast Guard still maintains a station here.

The lighthouse is a conical brick structure thirty-five feet tall. Painted white, it has a metal cupola. The lens has been removed. The keeper's quarters is a stuccoed brick building of two stories with a stuccoed frame addition.

This property has been included on the Natinal Register of Historic Places, United States Department of the Interior.

Easement *SM-270* *SM-1902455*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Piney Point Coast Guard Light Station

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Hurry Road (MD 498)

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Piney Point

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Maryland

CODE
24

COUNTY

St. Mary's

CODE

1205-037

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT

☐ BUILDING(S)

☒ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC

☐ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☒ GOVERNMENT

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSEUM

☐ PARK

☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

Department of Transportation, U. S. Coast Guard

STREET & NUMBER

Commander, Fifth Coast Guard District, 431 Crawford Street

CITY, TOWN

Portsmouth

VICINITY OF

Virginia 23705

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. Mary's County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Leonardtown

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

SM-270

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT☒ GOOD☐ FAIR☐ DETERIORATED☐ RUINS☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE☐ MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The complex as constructed in 1836 consisted of the Lighthouse structure, the Keeper's Quarters and an outhouse. The two (2) major structures remain; however, the original outhouse has long since passed into oblivion. Presumably, the specifications for the structures were developed by staff personnel of the Treasury Department.

The Lighthouse is a conical structure of brick painted white, 30 feet high. The focal plane of the light was 34 feet above the base. A cupola constructed of metal with rectangular glass panes surmounts the brick tower. Access to the cupola is gained by means of a circular wood stairway which occupies the entire core of the structure. Interesting early iron hardware remains on the heavy entrance door. Though the lens has been removed, the appearance of the structure is essentially as constructed in 1836.

The Keeper's Quarters is a brick constructed building, 34' x 20', with a 15' x 11' ell of stuccoed frame construction. Two stories over a full basement, the Keeper's Quarters has undergone radical interior alterations which have obliterated original conditions. Extensive architectural and documentary research would be required to determine its original appearance. The exterior is presently painted white with a red standing seam metal roof. A one-story porch extends across the northwest (entrance) facade.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1836/1897

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed in 1836, Piney Point was the first lighthouse built on the Potomac River. John Donohoo, constructor of several lighthouses in the Chesapeake Bay area, erected this structure at a cost of about \$5,000. The property on which the lighthouse was constructed was acquired in fee simple from Henry Suter and Charlotte Suter, his wife, by warranty deed dated 24 December 1835 for \$300.

Piney Point Light continued as a manned station under the lighthouse service until the incorporation of that service into the Coast Guard in 1939. The Coast Guard discontinued the light in 1964. The Coast Guard retains the Piney Point site as a station. The Keeper's residence is maintained as a facility for housing personnel. The lighthouse presently serves no particular purpose.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Robert de Gast, The Lighthouses of the Chesapeake
The John Hopkins University Press: 1973

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATAACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2

UTM REFERENCES

A 18 366010 421720
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Station located at end of state road 498 on Piney Point adjacent to the
Steuart Petroleum Company

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

W. M. Whittington, Realty Specialist

11-5-75

ORGANIZATION

Fifth Coast Guard District

DATE

804-393-9611, ext. 304

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

431 Crawford Street

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Portsmouth, Virginia 23705

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ☒NO ☐NONE ☐

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Piney Point Coast Guard Light Station

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

CITY, TOWN

Piney Point

____ VICINITY OF

COUNTY

St. Mary's

STATE

Maryland

3 PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT

Unknown

DATE OF PHOTO

1968

NEGATIVE FILED AT

Fifth Coast Guard District - Photo Lab

4 IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

PHOTO NO.

051768-06

Southern view of station looking from property owned by Steuart Petroleum Company.

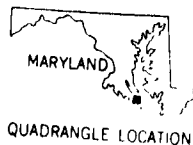
Coast Guard Piney Point
Light Station
UTM References
A - 18-366010
4221720

LEJ
SE
4000
364
32'30" 365
366

1 MILE
4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER

1' AL 10 FEET
1' 5-FOOT CONTOURS
SEA LEVEL
ET—DATUM IS MEAN LOW WATER
ESTIMATE LINE OF MEAN HIGH WATER
APPROXIMATELY 1.4 FEET

MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FEDERAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
FEDERAL SURVEY, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903
ADDITIONAL SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



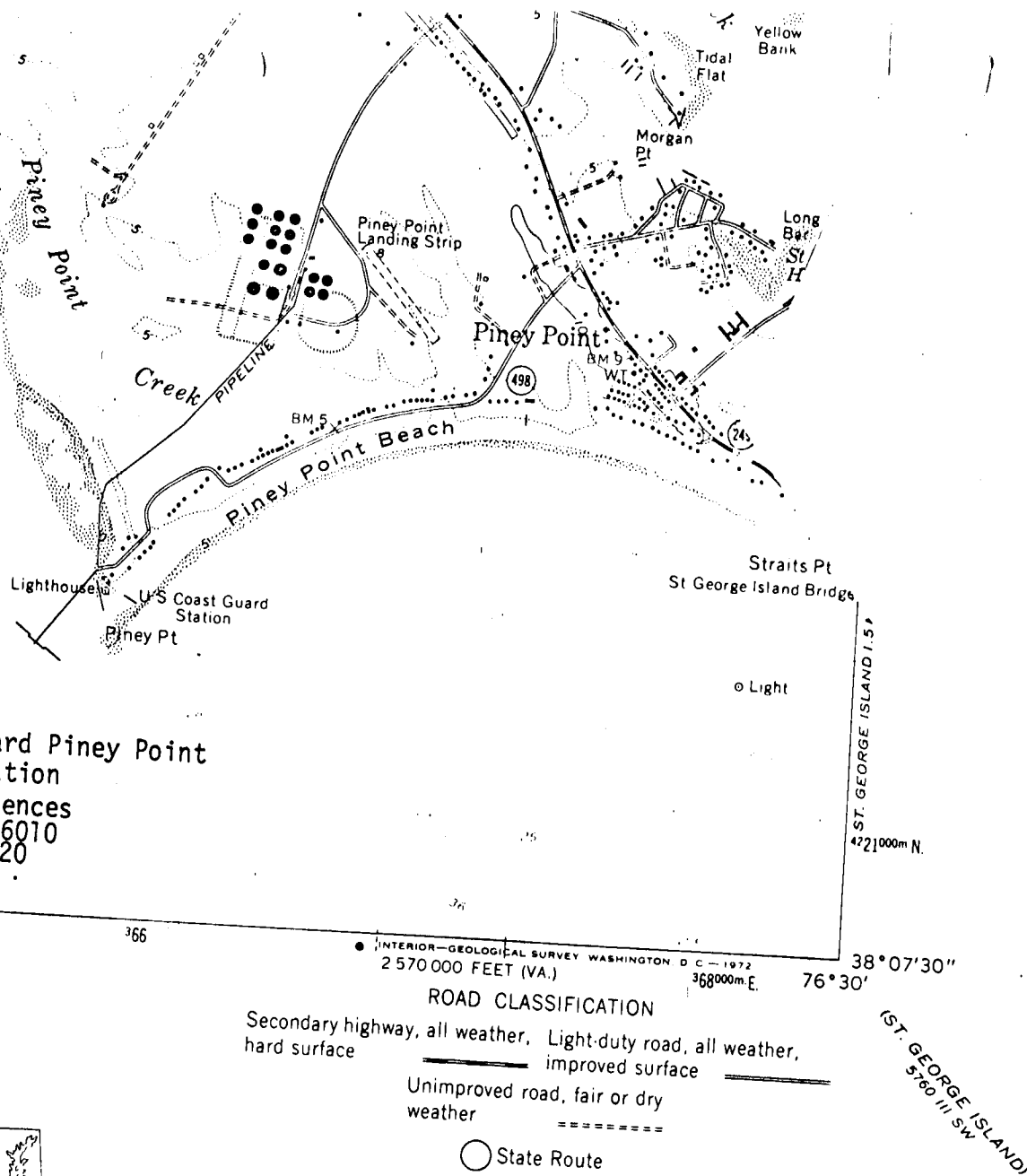
ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Secondary highway, all weather, Light-duty road, all weather,
hard surface improved surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry
weather

○ State Route

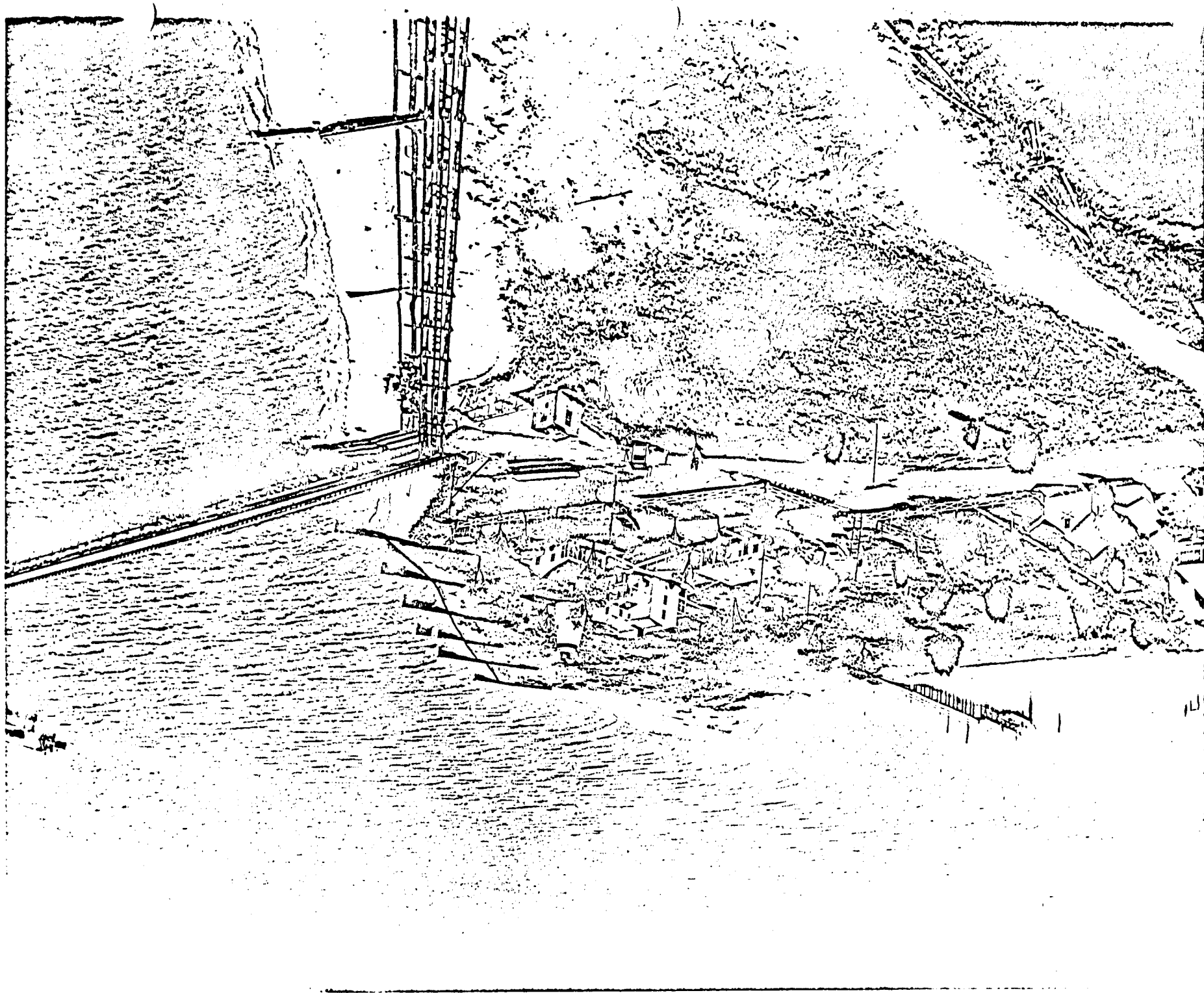
PINEY POINT, MD.—VA.
NE/4 PINEY POINT 15' QUADRANGLE
N3807.5—W7630/7.5

1968

AMS 5660 II NE—SERIES V833



SM-270



SM-270









SM-270

Piney Point Light Station

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranzeffa

Md SHPO

Feb/00

Looking E

1 of 3



SM-270

Piney Point Light Station

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ronzetta

Md SHPO

Feb/00

Looking N

2 of 2



SM-270

Piney Point Light Station

St. Mary's County, Md

Kirk Ranze-Ha

Md SHPO

Feb/06

Looking E

3 of 3

DATE

ASSIGNMENT

FILE NO.

2 KODAK 5053 TMY

3 KODAK 5053 TMY

4 KODAK 5053 TMY

5 KODAK 5053 TMY

1A

2

2A

3

3A

4

4A

5

5A

6

KODAK 5053 TMY

7 KODAK 5053 TMY

8

8 KODAK 5053 TMY

9

9 KODAK 5053 TMY

10

10 KODAK 5053 TMY

11

6A

7

7A

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8A

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KODAK 5053 TMY

12 KODAK 5053 TMY

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14 KODAK 5053 TMY

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15 KODAK 5053 TMY

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11A

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KODAK 5053 TMY

17 KODAK 5053 TMY

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18 KODAK 5053 TMY

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19 KODAK 5053 TMY

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20 KODAK 5053 TMY

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23 KODAK 5053 TMY

21A

22

23

23A

SM-270

Piney Point Lighthouse